

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSG #0142/01 0491435
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 181435Z FEB 09
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4450
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 3776
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 2288
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 1291
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0688
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1948
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 5964
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4231
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 2158
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

UNCLAS SANTIAGO 000142

SIPDIS

STATE FOR R/MR, I/PP, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, INR/IAA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [EFIN](#) [CI](#)

SUBJECT: CHILE MEDIA REPORT - FEBRUARY 18

Leading Stories

1. Stock markets worldwide fall due to doubts in the effectiveness of the bailout plan for the automobile industry in the United States. Finance Minister Andres Velasco's two-year old daughter accidentally fell into a swimming pool yesterday, and is on an induced comma to prevent further neurological damage.

U.S.-Related News

2. Chilean Ambassador to the United States Mariano Fernandez said that although Latin America is not a priority for the United States, because "the two main issues that show the success or failure of a U.S. President are not south of the Rio Grande," he believes President Obama will give Latin America more attention. Fernandez said that a difference must be made between regional and bilateral relations, in the sense that while countries such as Chile, Brazil, or Uruguay have very good relations with the United States, others in the region do not. Fernandez said that the "fundamental points of his policy toward the region" will become more evident at the Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago." He added that Secretary Clinton's appointment will be good for Chile (Cosas Magazine, 2/18).

3. The ties between President Obama and his Brazilian counterpart Inacio Lula da Silva could become the center of the new U.S. administration's policy toward Latin America. Observers say that Obama has clearly given priority to his relation with Brazil in the form of gestures and at the expense of Argentina or other countries who thought they had a better chance of establishing more visible ties with Obama. State Department sources tied to the previous administration said that Washington was not too thrilled with Cristina Fernandez' February 5 remarks that Obama was applying policies Argentina implemented in 2003, which mirrored policies implemented by former Argentine President Peron. The United States sees Brazil as an emerging power with a greater role in the region and one that could be a first-rate negotiator, hence its importance (La Tercera, conservative, independent, circ. 101,000, 2/18).

4. Wal-Mart invited D and S labor union leader Juan Moreno to meet with his counterparts in other countries where the U.S. retailer is operating to learn about the impact of the merger. Doug McMillan, Wal-Mart's second highest ranking CEO, arrived in Santiago this week to meet with the board of D and S. The American company bought 58% of the local retailer (La Segunda, conservative, afternoon, circ. 33,000, 2/17).

¶5. 13-year old Chilean Trinidad Soza is among the ten students chosen to read on television the letter she sent via e-mail to President Obama. In her letter, Trinidad expresses concerns about overweight children, and asks the president if children could receive more education on nutrition, and suggests providing healthier menus in public schools. "Overweight is not just about appearance. It's also about self-confidence, self-esteem, and health," stated the letter (El Mercurio, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record, 2/18).

¶6. Editorial entitled, "War in Afghanistan and the Challenges for the United States"

"The United States and its allies are facing a difficult military scenario in Afghanistan... (and) in this context Washington wants to send an additional 30,000 soldiers... but it's not clear what would be gained with this.... The new U.S. President... must not make the mistakes of the past or deepen those that are being committed today, such as the lack of control of the international aid being handed to the government of Kabul or the scarce attention given to the role Pakistan has in this conflict. This is a challenge from which the superpower (the U.S.) cannot be absent" (La Tercera, 2/28).

Bolivia

¶7. On Monday, Bolivian President Evo Morales thanked Fidel Castro for endorsing La Paz's claim for a passage to the sea (through Chilean territory). Morales also said he would like to see the international community play a more active role on this issue. Yesterday Acting Foreign Affairs Minister Alberto Van Klaveren "reminded" the Bolivian President that its maritime claim is "a strictly bilateral issue" between Chile and Bolivia (El Mercurio, 2/18).

Trade

¶8. Chilean exporters will inaugurate in June 2009, a 300-square meter facility in Soho, Manhattan, which is intended to become a business platform to service importers of Chilean goods and services. The facility will offer tourism packages, food, and special products (Diario Financiero, business and financial (circ. 30,000, 2/18).

Nuclear Energy

¶9. In February, the National Energy Commission opened a bidding process for the drafting of a new report on the development of nuclear-electric energy in Chile. Unlike previous reports, the new study will gather public opinion concerns on the topic (La Tercera, 2/18).

SIMONS